

University of Northern Iowa



Center for Energy & Environmental Education

2025 Impact Report



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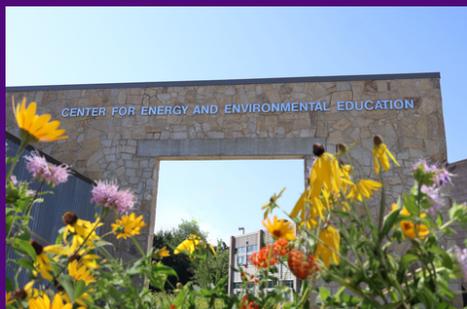
Our Mission

Empowering Iowans with the knowledge, experiences, tools, and inspiration needed to create a sustainable and desirable future for our communities.

The Center for Energy & Environmental Education (CEEE) creates opportunities for students, faculty, and staff at the University of Northern Iowa and beyond to work with community leaders to arrive at evidence-based, solution-oriented responses to the problems they wish to address. We offer technical assistance and services, educational programs, and leadership in energy and environmental conservation, community-based agriculture, and environmental health through staff, national service members, and volunteers. The CEEE serves cities, counties, school districts, teachers, farmers, businesses, elected officials, state agencies, organizations, and individuals.

Looking Ahead

Our goals for 2030



By 2030, the Center for Energy & Environmental Education will be...

- A trusted leader, offering innovative services and programs that meet the needs of individuals and communities helping to build a more resilient and sustainable future.
- Working collaboratively with the UNI community to enhance and support research and create learning opportunities.
- A financially stable Center with diverse funding sources that provide sustainable support for core programs as well as opportunities to foster innovation, new programs, and services.
- A team of trusted leaders within their professional fields who foster a collaborative culture across programs, assisting with the growth and professional development of individuals who seek careers focused on the Center's expertise.
- A Center with a strong foundation of strategic volunteer engagement with the ability to connect volunteers, programs, and communities to create deeply impactful experiences for all.

From the Director

Ashley Coffin, CEEE Director

Hello, friends. If you are reading this, we have found our way to the other side of 2025. Phew! What a year! Of course, the year had its moments of uncertainty and challenge. But with it, we also saw an **opportunity to grow in our clarity, connection, and durability to show up for the ideas, people, and places we treasure most.** What I'm learning more and more as I get older, professionally and in motherhood, is that **it's A LOT of work to protect what we love.** The most important kind of work. That effort and focus and showing up are always important but **never more important than when things are hard.** And I could not be more proud of how our staff and our partners in community have continued to show up this year. A group that remains **steadfast in their mindset of adaptability, support, and resiliency.**



The numbers and stories from our report this year tell a beautiful story of impact. All the ways we were able to keep pouring into our work and Iowa communities because of our funders, partners, and passionate staff, AmeriCorps members, students, and volunteers. What we accomplished together leaves me feeling proud of where we've been and hopeful about where we are going. **So often it is not about what is ahead but who you are traveling with.** Thanks for walking alongside us and tackling the hard work together.

Our Staff

Ashley Coffin, Director, CEEE & Green Iowa AmeriCorps

Barbara Rasmusson, Clerk

Audrey E. Tran Lam, Environmental Health Program Director

Brittany Latch, Environmental Health Program Associate

Brandy Case Haub, Program Manager, Green Iowa AmeriCorps

Shawn Fluckey, Community Energy Program Coordinator

Laura Mast, Recruitment Specialist, Green Iowa AmeriCorps

Leah Poole, Communications Coordinator

Jodie Huegerich, Regional Food Systems Manager

Sarah Steinmeyer, Nourish Iowa Program Manager

Kathryn Gilbery, Local Food Access Manager



Center for Energy & Environmental Education

2025 OVERVIEW

\$1,492,292

Funds Leveraged

57,900

People Reached Through
CEEE Programming and
Projects

6,359

K-12 Students & Teachers
Reached by CEEE
Programming

Environmental Health Program

- Secured **\$300,000 in funding** to support the Environmental Health Program for **2 years**
- **16,000+ community members** reached to educate about the harmful health impacts of pesticides
- **6 UNI Student Fellows** and **2 AmeriCorps members** helped spread the word about Good Neighbor Iowa and engage the community, focusing on Community Outreach, Social Media, and Tech Support
- Collaboration with Beyond Pesticides to present “Life is Full of Turf Choices” at the Growing Sustainable Communities Conference in Dubuque
- Mentored **5 students** in environmental health programs nationally (University of Northern Iowa, University of Iowa, Johns Hopkins University, University of Texas, and University of Indiana)
- Contributed a recorded lecture to Johns Hopkins University’s Intro to Food Systems Course - focusing on environmental harms of midwestern ag practices. This lecture will be included in the virtual course for the foreseeable future
- Presented at **6 conferences (2 national), 4 universities and colleges** (Johns Hopkins University, Williams College, University of Minnesota, and Grinnell College), on **3 national webinars**, and gave **2 interviews** (Canary in a Cornfield podcast, Harvest Public Media)
- Convened the first ever Environmental Health Student Symposium at UNI with some wonderful keynote speakers, features of UNI student projects, and networking opportunities for students, with **47 attendees**
- Hosted **3 screenings** of *Plastic People: The Hidden Crisis of Microplastics* documentary across the state in Cedar Rapids, Cedar Falls, and Des Moines
- Environmental Health staff lent their expertise on scientific advisory committees for the IEC Cancer Project
- Held **4 calls** for the Pesticides & Public Health Working Group that addressed a variety of topics related to pesticides, farming practices, regulatory challenges, and public health
- Over **125 professionals** reached regularly through a comprehensive digest of pesticide-related research, news, and updates on public health and the environment

Green Iowa AmeriCorps

- **667** Educational Programs, engaging **21,253** participants
- **841** Community Outreach Events, engaging **4,390** volunteers, serving **15,478** volunteer hours
- Green Iowa AmeriCorps service members and volunteers planted **5,871** trees
- Teams completed **204** Residential Energy Audits, helping to assess the air leakage in homes and save money on utility bills
- **1,178** Weatherizations completed and Energy Saver Kits Distributed to the community, helping Iowans save money on their home energy bills
- **127** Water Quality Mitigation Projects completed
- **19** Host Sites throughout Iowa with cities, counties, conservation departments, non-profits, and other community organizations
- **54** AmeriCorps Members in service dedicating a total of **54,848** Service Hours towards Getting Things Done for our communities across Iowa



43

UNI Faculty
Participated in CEEE
Programming

72

UNI Students
Participated in CEEE
Programming

392

UNI Students Reached
by CEEE Programming

Local Food Program

- **28** attendees at the annual Local Food Producer & Buyer networking event
- **125** community members attended the annual Farm to Fork dinner
- **27** Farmers Market Vendors attended the Cedar Valley Farmers Market Workshop
- Hosted the first annual UNI Local Food Festival with **12 vendors** and over **500 attendees**
- **622** K-12 students reached through Farm to School events
- Attended **20** events hosting food demonstration and information tables in and around Black Hawk County
- Nourish Iowa VISTA AmeriCorps: Engaged **13** VISTA members in service, supporting over **75** community events and workshops, helping to distribute over **80,000 pounds** of fresh produce, and creating or enhancing dozens of educational and outreach resources
- Nourish Iowa VISTA secured more than **\$415,000** in grants and sponsorships to support this work while strengthening partnerships with schools, nonprofits, farmers, and local governments
- Partnered with **7** host sites to distribute Veggie Vouchers to clients in need, with **654** families served through our Veggie Voucher program: **36%** of families had children, **56%** of families had a senior in the household
- **32** Local Farmers enrolled in the Veggie Voucher program with **\$20,940** in fresh fruits and vegetables purchased through Veggie Vouchers at farmers markets
- Installed **55** gardens at homes, schools, churches, and nonprofit organizations through the Garden in Every Lot program
- Community Gardens in the Cedar Valley: **42** families maintaining garden plots at the Highland Park Community Garden, **29** families maintaining gardens at the Central Christian Church Community Garden, which has doubled in size and number of families
- Established the new SPROUT Garden behind the CEEE, engaging over **80** volunteers who helped harvest **1,367 pounds** of fresh produce that was donated to the UNI Panther Pantry

Resilient Iowa Communities

- **6** Iowa communities were recognized at the 2025 Recognition Award Ceremony at the Iowa State Capitol Building
- **20** energy and carbon sequestration projects were completed in communities across Iowa including tree and prairie planting, distribution of energy saver kits to rural communities, and the completion of greenhouse gas inventory baseline
- RIC was selected as Iowa's Regional Navigator by the Great Plains Institute to connect Iowa communities with energy-related resources and technical assistance
- **398** trees planted in Cedar Falls, Waterloo, Evansdale, and Oxford through our Neighborhood Trees program thanks to funding from the Wright Foundation and **148** volunteers who donated **375** hours of their time helping us plant
- **250** saplings were distributed to community members at the Aldrich Elementary Wellness Fair in Cedar Falls & Waterloo Leisure Services' annual tree distribution event
- Our Neighborhood Trees team also assisted with maintenance at Waverly's Donation Orchard, West Des Moines' Mini-forest, and Seed Savers Exchange's Historic Orchard

Environmental Health Program

Good Neighbor Iowa • Farming for Public Health • Climate, Toxics, and Health

Highlighting upstream solutions to protect children, climate, and health.

Audrey E. Tran Lam
Environmental Health Program Director

Brittany Latch
Environmental Health Program Associate

\$300,000

of funding secured to support the Environmental Health Program for 2 years.



GOOD NEIGHBOR IOWA

180+ NEW Good Neighbors Pledged to reduce unnecessary pesticide usage.

16,000+ Community Members Reached to educate about the harmful health impacts of pesticides

Our Good Neighbor Iowa staff, student fellows, and AmeriCorps members were at a number of community events and activities across the state sharing information about the harmful health impacts of pesticides.

- Central Iowa: Des Moines Botanical Gardens: Learn on Saturday, Nine Square Feet, Iowa Environmental Council Annual Conference, DIG into Gardening Symposium, Aspire of Perry, Carlisle Garden Tour
- Eastern Iowa: Growing Sustainable Communities Conference, Iowa City Earth Expo, Cedar Falls Earth Fair, Indian Creek Nature Center's Monarch Fest, University of Northern Iowa Local Food Festival, Rooted Carrot Fall Food Festival
- Featured on Iowa Public Radio



“LIFE IS FULL OF TURF CHOICES”

Environmental Health Staff collaborated with Beyond Pesticides' Rika Gopinath to share a table and present “Life is Full of Turf Choices” at the **Growing Sustainable Communities Conference** in Dubuque. Staff shared about organic landscape management practices and the harmful health impacts of using artificial turf.

UNI COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

6 UNI Student Fellows & 2 Green Iowa AmeriCorps members helped spread the word about Good Neighbor Iowa and engage the community, focusing on Community Outreach, Social Media, and Tech Support.

Students and members helped with:

- Good Neighbor Iowa Trivia Event & Spring Social
- Representation at events across the state including presentations at multiple public libraries
- Tabling at the Des Moines Farmers Market

Good Neighbor Iowa staff gave presentations to classes of UNI Students





ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH STUDENT SYMPOSIUM

Convened the first ever **Environmental Health Student Symposium: Activating the Precautionary Principle for a Healthier Future** at UNI!

The event featured some wonderful speakers including a keynote by **Carolyn Raffensperger**, executive director of the Science and Environmental Health Network and guest talk by **David Cwrtney** from the Center for Health Effects of Environmental Contamination. The symposium also featured presentations of UNI student projects and faculty courses supported by the Environmental Health Program and wrapped up by offering UNI students networking opportunities with career professionals in the environmental health field.

PLASTIC PEOPLE: THE HIDDEN CRISIS OF MICROPLASTICS

The Environmental Health Program hosted 3 public screenings of *Plastic People: The Hidden Crisis of Microplastics* in Cedar Rapids, Cedar Falls, and Des Moines, with additional screenings coming up in the spring of 2026!

Attendees learned about the growing threat of microplastics on human health and, afterwards, had an opportunity to discuss the film with the group.

COLLABORATIONS, PRESENTATIONS, AND MORE!

This year, Environmental Health Program Staff...

Contributed a recorded lecture to **Johns Hopkins University's Intro to Food Systems Course** focused on the environmental harms of midwestern agricultural practices. This lecture will be included in the virtual course for the foreseeable future.

Presented at **6 conferences** (2 national), **4 universities and colleges** (Johns Hopkins University, Williams College, University of Minnesota, and Grinnell College), on **3 national webinars**, and gave **2 interviews** (Canary in a Cornfield podcast, Harvest Public Media).

Continued to elevate the links between environment and cancer by lending their expertise to the scientific advisory committee for the **Cancer and Environmental Risk Factors in Iowa Project**, co-chaired and convened the **Iowa Cancer Consortium's Environment & Cancer Task Force**, and were invited to contribute slides on **environmental health resources for the 99 Counties Project** presentation.

Continued to build the **Climate, Toxics, and Health initiative** by partnering with science communicators to translate the science on harmful chemicals in everyday products into individual behavior change.

Provided **mentorship to 5 students in environmental health programs nationally** at University of Northern Iowa, University of Iowa, Johns Hopkins University, University of Texas, and University of Indiana.



PESTICIDES AND PUBLIC HEALTH WORKING GROUP

Environmental Health Program Staff continued to **lead and facilitate the Pesticides & Public Health Working Group** - an interdisciplinary quarterly meeting to discuss new research concerning pesticides' impact on public health.

CEEE staff held 4 calls this year that addressed the following topics: Regulatory challenges facing public health protection against pesticides, No-till farming practices and impacts to pesticide use, Fluorinated pesticides and the impacts to human health, and the Heartland Study, an observational cohort study that examines pesticide exposure on pregnant women in the rural midwest.

To complement this public health education service, CEEE Environmental Health Staff sends out a **comprehensive digest of pesticide-related research, news, and updates on public health and environment**. This twice-monthly digest now reaches over 125 professionals in healthcare, dietetics, farming, cancer control, water quality, and other fields!



Audrey Tran Lam speaking at a gathering at the Rodale Institute.



Iowa Nature Summit taken by Cami Koons with the Iowa Capitol Dispatch

Green Iowa AmeriCorps



Empowering Iowa for a greener future through service, education, and engagement.

Ashley Coffin
Director

Brandy Case Haub
Program Manager

Shawn Fluckey
Program Manager

Laura Mast
Recruitment Specialist

Leah Poole
Communications Coordinator



2024-2025 SERVICE TERM IMPACTS

667 Educational Programs

21,253 Educational Program Participants

841 Community Outreach Events

4,390 Volunteers Engaged

15,478 Volunteer Service Hours

5,871 Trees Planted

140 Garden Installations/Maintenance Projects

204 Residential Energy Audits

1,178 Weatherizations/Energy Saver Kits

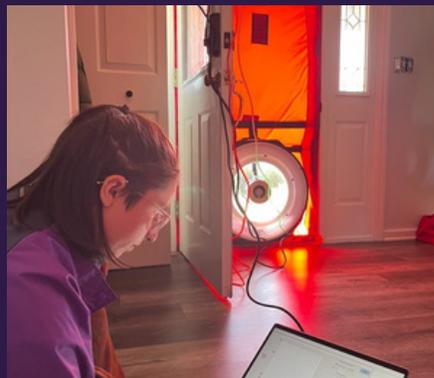
127 Water Quality Mitigation Projects

72 Waste Reduction or Removal Projects

19 Host Site Partnerships

54 AmeriCorps Members in Service

54,848 Total Member Service Hours



HOST SITE PARTNERSHIPS

Burlington Renewable Energy & Conservation Committee • Cedar Falls Community School District • CEEE Environmental Health Program • CEEE Neighborhood Resiliency • UNI Tallgrass Prairie Center • Whiterock Conservancy • Davenport Partnership • Greater Des Moines Habitat for Humanity • Trees Forever - Marion & Des Moines • City of Dubuque Sustainability Office • Iowa City Climate Action & Outreach Division • Table to Table Food Rescue • Polk County Conservation • Iowa Lakeside Laboratories • Mahaska County Conservation Partnership • Dubuque County Conservation • Black Hawk County Partnership

GIA MEMBER EXIT SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

93% of members rated their **service experience** a **7/10** or higher with an **overall average rating of 8.8/10**

80% feel they have **grown in their ability to work with others**

82% feel they have a **deepened understanding of how to network in their community**

91% feel they have a **deepened understanding of their professional goals**

91% feel they have **obtained new skills** they will use in the future

89% feel they have a **deepened sense of connection to the environment**

77% feel they have a **deepened sense of connection to their community**

8 **UNI Students/Alumni** served with GIA during the 24-25 service term



Hear from the Members!

POST SERVICE REFLECTIONS

*"I am grateful for the **relationships I have made throughout my service term** with people in my community. It is very fulfilling to be more **involved in the environmental community/culture** where I live. There are so many people I work alongside every day who **inspire me to make a positive difference.**"*

*"One positive thing I have taken from my service term is my **advancement in my public speaking goal**. At the start of my term, I would get very anxious when it came to speaking to people I didn't know or public speaking in general. Now, I don't get as anxious over it and I don't dread it."*

*"The **connections I've made** with other Green Iowa members, CEEE and GIA staff, and local organizations such as the TPC, Black Hawk County SWCD, and City of Cedar Falls have been the most important experiences for me. I've been able to **work to my strengths and display my work ethic** in memorable ways with those I've worked with."*

*"I feel more **confident in my skills** and ready to enter the natural resources field. Before Green Iowa, I had no idea where to begin or what I really wanted to do. **This program has helped me find direction**. I have also **gained confidence in my ability to advocate for the environment and other matters I feel passionate about.**"*

*"The opportunity to serve with GIA at Polk County Conservation was phenomenal. I got a **well-rounded experience with all areas of natural resources**, from seed harvest and processing to invasive species management to tree planting to volunteer coordination and so many other areas of skill. I knew I liked conservation, but **this point of entry gave me the chance to gain real-world work experience** and make connections where I wouldn't have been able to from the outside."*

*"A positive experience for me was how much I got to be outside during my term. **Getting out in my community**, interacting with people, sharing ways to make our home better, has all been **so impactful to me** and I'm really grateful for it."*

Local Food Program



A Garden in Every Lot • CVRFFN Coalition • Grow.Eat.Play.
Nourish Iowa VISTA • SPROUT Garden • Veggie Vouchers

Strengthening Iowa's local food economy.

Jodie Huegerich
Regional Food Systems Manager

Sarah Steinmeyer
Nourish Iowa Program Manager

Kathryn Gilbery
Local Food Access Manager



LOCAL FOOD HIGHLIGHTS

First Annual UNI Local Food Festival

In 2025, the Local Food Team hosted the first ever UNI Local Food Festival on UNI's Campus with 12 vendors attracting over 500 attendees.

Local Food Producer & Buyer Networking event

28 community members attended our annual networking event to make connections and learn about locally available products.

Cedar Valley Farmers Market Workshop

27 vendors attended our workshop to network and gain knowledge about farmers markets in the region.

Farm to Fork Dinner

125 community members came together to share a table, a story, and a meal, while supporting our local food system. This locally sourced meal was prepared by Diamond Event Center chefs.

Farm to School Events

622 K-12 students were reached through our Farm to School events



VEGGIE VOUCHERS



In 2025, Veggie Vouchers partnered with 7 host sites in the Cedar Valley including:

Allen College DeBonis Free Clinic • Basurto Behavioral Health • Black Hawk County Public Health • MercyOne • Peoples Community Health Clinic • Jesse Cosby Center • UnityPoint Clinics

- **654** food-insecure families were served
 - **36%** were families with children
 - **56%** of families had a senior in the household
- **32** local farmers were enrolled in the Veggie Voucher program
- **\$20,940** worth of vouchers were redeemed by Veggie Voucher clients to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables from local farmers markets



Food Demonstrations & Informational Tables

Our staff hosted 20 food demonstrations and informational tables at farmers markets and events, like the Iowa Eats Festival and Rooted Carrot Fall Festival, in Black Hawk County and surrounding counties. Through these events, we reached over 850 community members.

Statewide Food Systems

Local Food Program staff also participated in statewide food system work including the Iowa Food System Coalition, Iowa Farm to School and Early Care Coalition, Regional Food System Working Group (RFSWG), Iowa Food Hub Managers Working Group, and HEAL Partnership meetings.




A GARDEN IN EVERY LOT

SPROUT GARDEN

In the spring of 2025, the CEEE launched our very own SPROUT (**S**tudent **P**roduction, **R**egional **O**utreach, and **U**rban **T**raining) Garden!

The garden space, located behind the CEEE, was originally established and managed by a former UNI Center that closed in 2023, leaving the space empty. Given the proximity of the garden to the CEEE and our established programming focused on food access, gardening, and volunteer engagement, it only made sense to transition management of the space to the CEEE.

Despite a late start to the gardening season, we had an incredibly productive first year hosting numerous events for volunteers and groups including a Master Gardener Meet & Greet, VISTA AmeriCorps regional gathering, UNI Student Groups and Classes, and a Green Iowa AmeriCorps Gathering for new members. Produce from the garden went directly to UNI's Panther Pantry or to our SPROUT Pickup Stand to help students facing food insecurity.

Overall, **1,367lbs** of fresh produce was harvested from the garden and over **80 volunteers** were engaged in gardening activities throughout the season.

Through the Garden in Every Lot Program, our Local Food team and AmeriCorps members help install and establish backyard and community gardens for residents and community organizations to grow fresh, local produce.

55 gardens were installed throughout Cedar Falls, Waterloo, Evansdale, Waverly, Hudson, and La Porte City at homes, schools, churches, and nonprofits.

Community Gardens

The Center maintains a number of community gardens in the Cedar Valley including:

Highland Park Community Garden, established in 2023, has 42 families maintaining plots.

Central Christian Church Community Garden, established in 2024, has 29 families maintaining plots. This year, the garden doubled in size and number of families. Fencing, in-ground water infrastructure, a toolshed, and a prairie were installed in 2025.

More organizations have started to utilize space within these community gardens, hosting classes, engaging student interns, demonstrating conservation practices, and more!



NOURISH IOWA VISTA

Over the past year, Nourish Iowa VISTA members have driven transformative change across the state's food systems. Our program engaged **13 service members** at **8 service sites** across the state. Members made a lasting impact by supporting over **75 community events** including organizing educational events and launching innovative outreach campaigns, securing over **\$415,000 in grants** and distributing more than **80,000 pounds of fresh produce**. Their efforts have strengthened local partnerships and expanded food access. Through hands-on service, creative problem-solving, and deep community engagement, Nourish Iowa continues to lay the groundwork for a more resilient and equitable food future.

2025 VISTA Host Sites

- Farm, Food & Enterprise Development (FFED)
- Eat Greater Des Moines
- Iowa Food Systems
- Field to Family
- Tapestry Farms
- Table to Table
- We Arose / Waterloo Urban Farmers Market
- Feed Iowa First
- UNI Center for Energy & Environmental Education



Resilient Iowa Communities



Helping Iowa cities and counties achieve their sustainability, resiliency, and quality-of-life goals.

Ashley Coffin
Director

2025 RESILIENT IOWA COMMUNITY BEST PRACTICE AWARDS

The program doubled participation in its 2025 Resilient Iowa Community Best Practice Awards with new representation from across the state ranging from nonprofits and higher education institutions to county and city governments.

The recipients were recognized in a special award ceremony held at the state Capitol to celebrate achieving bronze, silver, or gold status in the program's six best practice categories: Buildings and Energy, Land Use, Transportation, Environmental Management, Community & Economic Development, and Environmental Equity & Inclusion. This recognition event was a collaborative celebration with 1000 Friends of Iowa who played a major role in the creation of RIC in 2021 and has their own best practice awards annually.

The 2025 award recipients include the City of Bloomfield, Whiterock Conservancy, Iowa Lakeside Laboratory, Linn County, Polk County Conservation, and Mahaska County partnership.



Bioretention cells installed in the City of Bloomfield



Prairie restoration and management at Iowa Lakeside Labs



Volunteer and park stewardship program in Mahaska County



Countywide water quality monitoring program at Polk County Conservation

RIC SELECTED AS IOWA'S REGIONAL ENERGY NAVIGATOR

Resilient Iowa Communities was selected as Iowa's Regional Navigator by the Great Plains Institute (GPI) to connect Iowa communities with energy-related resources and 20 hours of technical assistance.

The City of Ames executed a scope of work to have GPI identify the best locations for solar, issue a solar request for proposal, and review bids. The City of Decorah participated in the program to learn more about resiliency hubs and guidance with updating their existing climate action plan.

This was a great opportunity for the Center and RIC program to serve in its intended role of connecting Iowa communities big and small, rural and urban, to resources that can make a difference in their resiliency and quality-of-life goals.

ENERGY, CARBON SEQUESTRATION, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

The program completed year two of three of their Resilient Iowa Communities grant from the Iowa Energy Center focused on providing underserved communities with support to execute a variety of energy benchmarking and energy projects through the engagement of students, volunteers, and national service members in workforce development opportunities.

In 2025, the project was able to complete 20 energy and carbon sequestration projects in communities across Iowa including tree and prairie planting, distribution of energy saver kits to rural communities, and the completion of greenhouse gas inventory baseline. Participants received training in energy benchmarking software, residential energy audit and retrofit skills, along with a variety of transferrable skills in project development, community engagement, and navigating operations within municipalities.



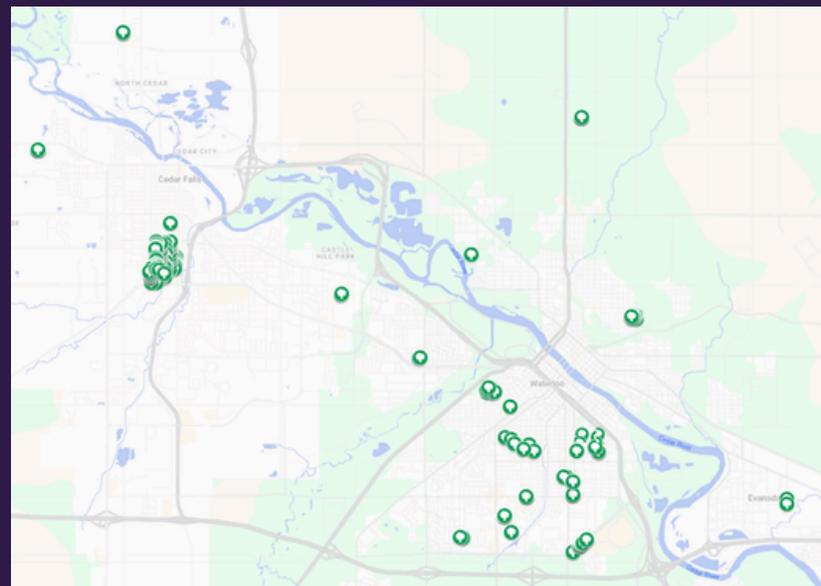
NEIGHBORHOOD TREES

In 2025, our Neighborhood trees program helped plant 398 trees in Cedar Falls, Waterloo, Evansdale, and Oxford. These tree planting efforts were made possible with support from the Wright Foundation and a group of 148 community volunteers who donated 375 hours of their time to help beautify their communities!

250 saplings were distributed by our AmeriCorps members at the Aldrich Elementary Wellness Fair in Cedar Falls and Waterloo Leisure Services' annual tree distribution event.

In May, we collaborated with Trees Forever and 30 employees volunteering from International Paper to plant 40 trees in Furgerson-Fields Park and along San Marnan Boulevard in Waterloo.

We assisted the City of Cedar Falls in planting 147 trees that were purchased with funding from Housing and Urban Development. Our group helped with planting, staking, and watering trees that were planted in the College Hill Neighborhood.



Tree Planting Locations

Our AmeriCorps members also assisted with maintenance of Waverly's Donation Orchard, West Des Moines' Mini-forest, and Seed Savers Exchange's Historic Orchard.

Fruit Trees for Refugees

This program is aimed at helping local refugee populations access culturally relevant fruits. In 2025, this program helped plant 245 plum, crabapple, persimmon, and chestnut trees for 35 families primarily in Waterloo.



CEEE Services & Resources

Visit our website at CEEE.uni.edu to learn more about our programs, services, and resources. Get in touch with our staff to see how you can get involved, access resources, and support our Center.

Environmental Health Program

The Environmental Health Program raises awareness about the link between harmful chemicals and their impacts to people and the environment.

Our initiatives focus on reducing the amount of harmful, unnecessary chemicals in our everyday lives.

- Educational resources about the effects of pesticide usage on children, pets, and the environment and healthy alternative lawn care practices through our Good Neighbor Iowa program
- Supporting field days where farmers and community members can learn and share sustainable farming practices
- Research on the public health impacts of farming
- Resources to identify harmful chemicals in everyday products

Local Food Program

The Local Food Program focuses on making food production and local food consumption accessible to everyone.

We create and host events that connect communities with local consumers and growers to encourage a food system that uplifts sustainability and collective efforts to support local foods.

- Gardening assistance through our Garden in Every Lot initiative
- Networking and community engagement events for local buyers and growers to work towards meeting community food needs
- Community training and education opportunities
- Capacity-building support for food access organizations through our Nourish Iowa VISTA program
- Improving access to fresh fruits and vegetables through our Veggie Vouchers program

Green Iowa AmeriCorps

Our AmeriCorps program partners with mission-aligned host organizations throughout the state to engage members and communities in environmental service work. We address key environmental issues while providing on-the-job skills training to our AmeriCorps members to support local communities and help train the next generation of skilled workers.

- Residential energy efficiency services including energy audits and energy saver kits to help Iowans save energy and money
- Educational programming to increase awareness of environmental issues
- Community outreach and volunteer engagement to build connection and resiliency in our communities
- Tree planting and environmental management services
- Workforce development skills for our members

Resilient Iowa Communities

Resilient Iowa Communities (RIC) assists cities and counties to improve the resiliency, sustainability, and quality of life of their residents.

We provide resources and information based on 6 Best Practice categories of action that can be tailored to fit the needs of each community.

- Climate action and greenhouse gas inventory support
- Access to Neighborhood Resiliency Services like energy auditing, tree planting, and garden installations
- Networking and technical assistance opportunities for RIC members to share resources and knowledge
- Annual recognition for communities who complete actions from our Best Practice categories to achieve gold, silver, or bronze status for their community

Get Connected

On Our Website

ceee.uni.edu

Find more information about:

- Services & Resources for each of our programs
- Upcoming Events on our CEEE Calendar
- Community Volunteer Opportunities
- AmeriCorps Service Opportunities
- Student Employment Opportunities



Subscribe to our Newsletters

Stay up to date on the latest things happening with our programs! You can find newsletter subscriptions on our website for:

- Friends of the CEEE
- Good Neighbor Iowa
- Green Iowa AmeriCorps
- Local Food Program
- Resilient Iowa Communities

Serve With Us

Volunteer for an hour, a day, or a whole year!

There are so many opportunities to get involved with our programs. From tree planting, to community gardening, cleaning and beautifying our neighborhoods, and more, our volunteers help us get it all done!

Each year, we also have a number of paid AmeriCorps service positions available through both of our AmeriCorps programs, which provide our members with a number of benefits including a living stipend, post-service education award, hands-on experience, and more.



Show your Support

Your support helps us continue providing services and helping Iowans all across the state!

Support can come in many different forms, whether that's showing up as a volunteer to support our community projects, donating supplies to help us do our work in the community, or financial donations that help support our programs. We appreciate it all, and your generosity makes a huge difference!

To provide a financial contribution to our Center, you can scan the QR code or visit our website at ceee.uni.edu/support-our-programs and use the "Financial Donation" button.

To learn more about upcoming volunteer opportunities or other ways to get involved, please reach out to us at uni-ceee@uni.edu.





UNI / University of Northern Iowa.
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